

Confaldheim to try for Cyprus peace

ENNA, April 12 (R). — U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim said today he might launch a fresh Cyprus peace initiative after receiving new Turkish-Cypriot proposals here tomorrow on the future of the divided island. Mr. Waldheim told reporters on arrival from London he would not decide on a special trip to Nicosia until he had a chance to study the Turkish proposals. But asked about a weekend flight to the island for consultations with a Greek and Greek-Cypriot leader, Mr. Waldheim replied: "It is possible, it is not excluded."

Volume 3, Number 727

Ceausescu warns of peace menace

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — President Nicolae Ceausescu, who has steered a dependent course between East and West, told President Carter today that the world is "threatening clouds men-peace."

The Romanian leader was at an official arrival ceremony during which President Carter said the bonds linking the United States and Romania were more important than their ideological differences and membership of opposing military alliances.

President Ceausescu, whose country's human rights record has been criticised by the Carter administration, said the recent Belgrade conference revising the Helsinki agreements on European security and cooperation had made no significant progress in improving West relations.

welcoming the Romanian leader, President Carter today said Jerusalem as the capital of Israel -- a status which the U.S. government has agreed to apply to the city. He used the term in saying recent notable achievements.

Soviets claim diplomat held by U.S. intelligence

UNITED NATIONS, April 12 (R). — The Soviet Mission to the United Nations charged yesterday that Arkady N. Shevchenko, absent top-ranking member of the U.N.ariat, was being held "under duress" by U.S. intelligence services in a "detention frameup."

circumstances surrounding Shevchenko's appearance of A.N. Shevchenko, the statement read, "leave no doubt that he has been the victim of a calculated provocation and the U.S. intelligence services have been directly involved in this detestable framework."

But Shevchenko's New York Lawyer, Ernest A. Gross, noted that his U.N. employment contract had two years to go and contended that for the United Nations to fire him out of hand just on Soviet request would violate the U.N. charter.

U.S. denies charge

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — The U.S. government today denied Soviet charges that it was holding Soviet U.N. diplomat Arkady Shevchenko against his will. "He is free to stay, return to the Soviet Union or go to another country as he wishes," state department spokesman Tom Reston said.

Alia leads Arab airlines in promoting joint operations on long distance routes

By John Bonar, *Editor to the Jordan Times*

JORDAN, April 11 (PT). — Chairman of Alia, the Jordanian Airline, before the Government of Jordan should underwrite losses suffered by the national carrier in operating uneconomic flights to Aqaba and Amman.

It is also clear that at present he is in the hands of the services under duress and unable to act on his own. In connection with this out-of-proportion provocation, the Soviet Union has registered a strong protest with the government and demands that the Soviet citizen A.N. Shevchenko be returned to the USSR. The Soviet Mission to the

747's not a financial burden

The Chairman of Alia categorically denied that the company faced any flow or profit problems because of its purchase of Boeing 747 aircraft. "Our 747's to Bangkok are almost full and our flights to New York are running at 78 per cent capacity."

"We are suffering no strain, no financial problems, because of our purchase of these aircraft," said Mr. Ghandour, refuting rumours that the 747's represent a financial burden to Alia.

The Alia chairman acknowledged that, as with any large capital investment involving commercial borrowing on the Euromarkets, there are "substantial" repayments to be made in interest and capital on the finance arranged for Alia to purchase the aircraft. "However we are able to meet them and they are not a problem for us," said Mr. Ghandour.

Daily flights from Arab capitals to U.S.?

Mr. Ghandour revealed that correspondence was now underway between several Arab airlines and the civil aviation authorities in the United States seeking authority for a daily flight between the Arab countries and the U.S. This flight would be operated by aircraft of the Arab airline fleets, bearing their own



Mr. Ali Ghandour, Chairman of Alia, looks over a Learjet executive aircraft of Alia's affiliate Arab Wings, at Amman airport. (PT photo)

colours, but would be marketed under one consortium name, such as "Arab Air America".

Mr. Ghandour said the airlines which have agreed to form the consortium are Saudi, Gulf Air, Middle East Airlines and Kuwait Airways in addition to Alia and Syrian Arab Airlines, which are already operating a twice weekly joint flight to New York from Amman.

Alia has taken a lead in promoting cooperation among regional airlines. The joint flight operated by Alia on behalf of themselves and Syrian Airlines

is the first such joint operation in the Middle East. Alia will shortly be introducing a similar joint service with Gulf Air to operate between Amman and various Gulf destinations and within the Gulf. This is in addition to the joint service now being promoted by Alia, Gulf Air, MSA and Cyprus Airways for flights from the Gulf to Amman, Beirut and Larnaca.

Flights to south America

After a recent visit by Mr. Ghandour to West Africa, the legal formalities have been co-

mpleted for the inauguration of flights from Amman to South America, via West Africa. It is planned to operate two weekly flights. One will be Amman-Lagos-Abidjan - Rio de Janeiro and the other Amman-Kano-Dakar - Rio de Janeiro.

Agreements with Brazil, Senegal and Nigeria had already been concluded, but administrative problems prevented the finalisation of an air transport accord with the Ivory Coast which has no diplomatic representation in Jordan. After Mr. Ghandour's talks with Mr. Koffi, the Chairman and President of Air Afrique and Mr. Savane Vassifiki, the Director of Civil Aviation, the Ivory Coast has granted Alia a temporary permit to operate through the country pending the signing of a full agreement by the civil aviation departments of Jordan and the Ivory Coast.

Mr. Ghandour said that Alia is offering to share this route with other Arab airlines on the same basis as the New York flights are shared with Syrian Arab Airlines. "Sound reasons" for shelving "Arab Air University"

Plans for an Arab Air University have not been shelved, added Mr. Ghandour, who added, "there were sound reasons" for the recent cutbacks in the size and staff of the Royal Academy of Aeronautics. The decision to strip the ac-

JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردن تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية العربية (الرأي)

AMMAN, THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1978 — JAMADI AWAL 4, 1398

U.S. will stand by NATO

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — The U.S. Defence Department, in an unusual move, today made public portions of a secret document saying that it did not plan abandoning the southern and northern flanks of NATO. A few lines from the Pentagon's voluminous guidance to the military services for planning the 1980 defence budget were released as Defence Secretary Harold Brown left for a nine-day trip to Europe to consult with NATO allies. "We do not advocate abandoning the flanks of NATO... we would not propose to abandon the Mediterranean," Mr. Brown said in the budget guideline document.

Price: Jordan 50 fils; Syria 50 piastres; Lebanon 75 piastres; Saudi Arabia 1 riyal; UAE 1 dirham; Great Britain 25 pence.



Israeli troops in Occupied Lebanon stop civilian trucks bearing Lebanese refugees back to their war shattered villages in south Lebanon on Wednesday. The refugees were allowed to proceed after their identity papers were checked. (AP wirephoto)

New Soviet weapons captured by Israelis in S. Lebanon invasion

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, April 12 (Agencies) — As Israeli troops settled into new positions in southern Lebanon Wednesday, Prime Minister Menachem Begin called the month-long occupation a qualified military and political success.

Begin said the establishment of a peacekeeping force on Israel's northern border, long harassed by infiltrations and rocket attacks, was a political achievement. But he said the long-range effectiveness of that arrangement was still in doubt.

Critics have accused the government of overreacting to the terrorist assault outside Tel Aviv on March 11 which cost 35 Israeli lives. Lebanese reports say over 2,000 civilians were killed in Israeli air strikes and artillery bombardments.

The critics also say the Israeli action did not hinder the Palestinians' capability to harass Israeli border settlements with artillery and rocket fire from their new positions.

Defence officials declined to confirm or deny a report in the English language Jerusalem Post saying that an estimated 280 civilians died in the south Lebanon fighting.

Weapons captured

Israeli spokesmen have declined to give estimates of the civilian death toll. The Post report, attributed to authoritative but unofficial sources, said Israelis had so far buried about 180 civilian victims of the conflict.

An estimated 100 more civilians had been buried by the

air families or had been lying undiscovered in the scores of ruined villages, the Post said.

While refusing to talk about civilian casualties, an army spokesman issued a long list of weapons captured from Palestinians in south Lebanon.

The spokesman said the importance attached by Israel to the haul was not the numbers of weapons but the fact that they included modern Russian weapons of a type not so far seen in the Middle East.

Among these new weapons were a new 73 mm recoilless gun, a new Strela-7 anti-aircraft missile, the announcement said.

The list included six Lebanese Chariot tanks and two old-model Sherman tanks, 18 anti-tank guns, 18 recoilless guns and 40 of the latest Soviet rocket grenade launchers.

In addition there was a large but unspecified quantity of Katyusha launchers and miscellaneous ammunition.

Rightwing military leaders blamed the latest fighting on the Palestinians and described

the situation as a replay of the 1975 events which triggered the war.

As the rightwing voice of Lebanon radio station broadcast urgent appeals for blood donors, the military leaders of the two major rightwing parties called a news conference to say that Palestinians bore sole responsibility for the latest bloodshed.

Syria threw tanks and "Strela" organ rocket batteries into battle to restore peace between the districts where four days of fighting killed at least 15 and wounded 75.

After furious morning exchanges between leftists in Shiyah and rightists in Ain Rummaneh, fighting subsided when Syrian troops in the hills overlooking the combat zone pounded targets below with Katyusha rockets.

Tanks guns of the Syrian-dominated Arab League peace force, which is policing the Lebanese civil war, were concentrated on targets in Christian Ain Rummaneh.

On April 13, 1975, rightist militiamen in Ain Rummaneh ambushed a bus carrying Palestinians, killing 27 of them.

The attack resulted in steadily escalating rounds of fighting between rightists and forces of Lebanon's alliance of Palestinian commandos and leftists.

Palestinians must "beware"

In what was interpreted as a statement falling just short of a declaration of war on the

Syria accuses Israel of using atomic device

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP). — Syria accused Israel today of "seriously escalating the Middle East conflict" by planting a booby trap device on Syrian territory that exploded and emitted lethal radioactive particles.

An official government statement said the device exploded April 1 near the Damascus-Jordan highway, killing 12 persons.

It said Syria complained to the United Nations. It charged Israel with a "barbaric and savage violation of international rules forbidding the use of atomic bombs in civilian territory."

The Syrians did not suggest the device was actually an atomic bomb. They said it was a device planted inside a radio receiver, that emitted radioactive particles from atomic cells made in the United States.

The statement said that "Israel bears all the consequences resulting from this new and dangerous development."

Syrian guns pound Beirut area to quell rightists

BEIRUT, April 12 (R). — Arab peace keeping forces today bombed Beirut's Christian suburb of Ain Rummaneh where rightists have been fighting leftists in the neighbouring Moslem district of Shiyah for four days. The tank and rocket assault by the Syrian-dominated force killed 25 people in Ain Rummaneh and wounded 60, according to right-wing estimates. The sources said 12 Syrians were killed but there was no official confirmation of the casualty toll.

Palestinians in Lebanon, Mr. Chamoun declared that they "must pack up their arms and behave as decent citizens."

Officials of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have denied Palestinian involvement in the latest fighting. There has been no eyewitness confirmation of significant Palestinian front-line participation.

"What the devil are you doing here?" he barked. "Go home, take cover, this isn't a television play."

Though the fighting was restricted to two districts, most schools in predominantly Christian eastern Beirut closed in the morning. In Ain Rummaneh, civilians huddled in basements as protection against shrapnel.

Fears of renewed fighting despite Syria's intervention were fuelled when the radio station of the Phalangist Party began broadcasting martial music -- for the first time since the end of the war.

Israeli soldier killed in south Lebanon clash

TEL AVIV, March 12 (R). — An Israeli soldier was killed in a clash with a Palestinian guerrilla group in the west sector of south Lebanon, the military command said here today.

It identified the soldier as a 26-year-old corporal but gave no further details about the incident.

Earlier yesterday three Israeli soldiers were killed and another seriously wounded in south Lebanon when their military vehicle, which they were driving without authorisation, overturned. Seven Israeli were ambushed by Palestinian guerrillas while on a joy ride in south Lebanon last week.

Two managed to get back to Israel but five are missing behind Palestinian lines, and are believed dead.

In Beirut a Palestinian commando organisation today claimed responsibility for last night's explosion in Jerusalem and said more than five Israelis were killed or wounded in the blast. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) said in a statement that one of its commando units planted explosive charges near the Jaffa gate of Old Jerusalem. It said the explosion caused heavy damage.

Last night Jerusalem police said a small explosive charge went off in the area, causing no casualties.

Nkomo says Owen, Vance will join Rhodesia talks in Dar Es Salaam

LUSAKA, Zambia, April 12 (AP). — Joshua Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance, left today for Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, where he and Maputo-based leader, Robert Mugabe will take part in Anglo-American sponsored talks on Rhodesia during the upcoming weekend.

Speaking in an interview before his departure, Nkomo said, "we are going to Dar Es Salaam to resume the adjourned Malta talks on Rhodesia."

He confirmed that the Dar Es Salaam talks on Rhodesia will also be attended by British Foreign Secretary David Owen and U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

Asked what specific issues will be discussed, Nkomo replied, "we are going to discuss the acceptable elements of the Anglo-American proposals on the Rhodesian independence dispute."

He said other aspects of the discussions would mainly be on "military and constitutional matters including the venue for an all-party conference based on Anglo-American proposals."

ing partial withdrawal in two stages in order to cover up its military preparations in some parts of south Lebanon to remain there for a long time," the paper said.

It added that the U.N. Security Council should apply firm sanctions against Israel if it failed to withdraw fully from Lebanese territory.

Syrian press demands sanctions to force Israel to withdraw

DAMASCUS, April 12 (R). — The semi-official Syrian newspaper Al Thawra charged today that Israel was misleading the world community over its withdrawal from south Lebanon, and called for the application of sanctions against it.

"Israel is stalling and claim-

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Editor: HAME G. KHOURI
Managing Editor: JENAB TUTUNJI
Deputy Managing Editor: BASSAM BISHUTI
Editorial Staff: ALAN MARTIN
Responsible Editor: MOHAMAD AMAD

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan
Telephones: 67171-2-3-4
Telex: 1497 Al Ra'i JO, Cables: JOKTIMES, Amman Jordan

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Mr Begin's disaster

The Israelis usually do not waste any opportunity to tell the world about their peaceful intentions and their good behaviour, and their withdrawal from south Lebanon normally would be such an opportunity to be squeezed for its maximum propaganda value. Indeed, in normal times, the assorted Zionist groups in the United States would organise special dinners, at \$1,000 a plate, to commemorate the Israeli withdrawal from the south Lebanon territory invaded one month ago. But these are not normal times, and the Israeli withdrawal that has been slowly initiated this week will not be trumpeted so loudly, because it is a glaring testament to the failure of everything that Israel has ever stood for in the past.

Prime Minister Begin ordered the invasion and occupation of south Lebanon with the aim of cutting down the Palestinian resistance fighting forces, and he said that Israel would withdraw only when the U.N. peace-keeping troops neutralised the Palestinians and guaranteed Israel's security. Well, now the Israelis are withdrawing and leaving the south of Lebanon in the same vacuum that it has been in for the past several years, with neither the U.N. troops nor the Lebanese themselves having full control in the region. In other words, Premier Begin has had to eat his words.

The Israeli invasion of south Lebanon has been rightly perceived by the Israeli leaders for exactly what it is -- a disaster, and totally unrelated to guaranteeing Israel's security in the north. The instinctive, reflexive Israeli resort to the gun has proved inappropriate and ineffective once again.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARY

On the question of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon Al Ra'i says that Israel Tuesday began to carry out the first stage of "the comedy of its alleged withdrawal from south Lebanon at a time when the United Nations secretary general, Lebanon and other concerned quarters have expressed dissatisfaction over this token pullback which will hardly include, in its two stages, one fifth of the occupied Lebanese territory."

The newspaper questions the effectiveness of U.N. Resolution 425 which calls on Israel for a complete and immediate withdrawal from south Lebanon, and the world organisation's inability to deploy up to 4,000 U.N. troops in the area.

Al Ra'i is apprehensive that by not completely implementing resolution 425, Israel intends to link up the occupied Lebanese area with the rest of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, and to postpone the whole question of withdrawal until after a comprehensive settlement is reached in the Middle East...

The newspaper puts the blame squarely on the Arab countries for allowing such partial arrangements which always "work in Israel's favour and provide it with broad security belts at the expense of Arab land."

Taking the same view, Tariq Al Masarweh, writing in Al Dustour, deplores Arab indecision and failure to confront Israel's expansion during the past 30 years. What Israel calls its security defence line in Lebanon has been created by its invasion of the south, in addition to its "security belts" already marked in Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank, the writer says.

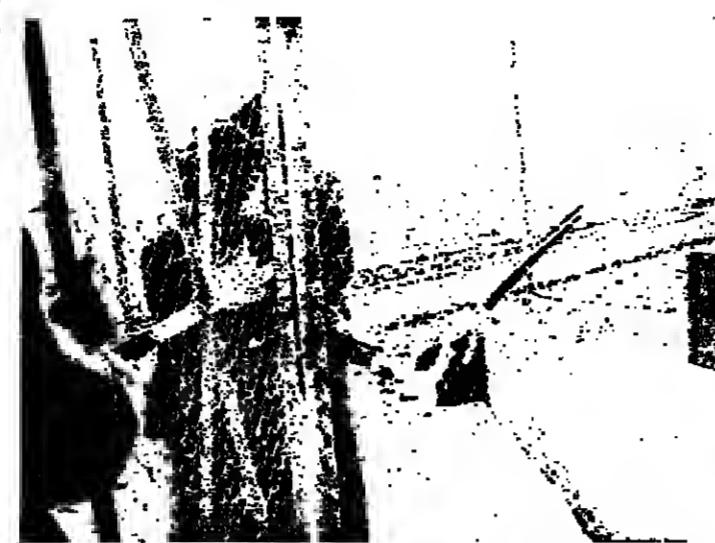
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Amman Water & Sewerage Authority (AWSA)
Prequalification date for Contracts
IS & 5WS

AWSA announces that the closing date for receiving the prequalification data for contracts IS & 5WS (expansion of Sewage Collection & Water Laterals and house connections) which was fixed on April 30, 1978 has been extended to May 15, 1978. Qualified Contractors will be advised by June 15, 1978 when they will be invited to submit bids.

General Manager
Tahsin Sabbagh

Almost driven to extinction by hunters, the Arabian oryx makes a comeback to Jordan



Side view of the Arabian oryx gives the illusion of a one-horned animal, which has perhaps given rise to the legend of the unicorn.

Text and photos
By Ginette Devaney
Special to the Jordan Times

Following the arrival in February of four male Arabian oryx leucoryx, the first of these extremely rare animals, formally indigenous to Jordan, to live here for nearly forty years, I visited the Shaumari Reserve of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN). This 22 square km. site lies near Azraq some 100 kms. east of Amman. There I spoke to Mr. John Clarke, the project leader who showed me around and to Mr. Lassry Schiffel, the keeper from the Wild Animal Park in San Diego, California who arrived with the oryx on Feb. 17.

Mr. Clarke, an Englishman, is a zoologist by profession but before coming to Jordan with his wife, two and a half years ago, he had spent the previous 19 years involved with game reserves in Africa: six of those years being spent at Director of Parks in Zambia.

Emoloyed by the World Wildlife Fund in co-operation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in Mornes near Geneva, Switzerland, Mr. Clarke not only runs the reserve and is in sole charge of all aspects of animal care and welfare including future breeding plans, but he is also involved with the planning and setting up of a system of nature reserves throughout Jordan and the drafting of a wildlife law. He has completed the first phase of that of compiling management plan for the reserves and this has now been submitted to the RSPN for further consideration.

The beginning of a herd

The four Arabian oryx now living at Shaumari were a gift to Jordan from the Board of Trustees of the World Herd of

This is the first in a two-part series on the preservation of wildlife in Jordan.



A male Arabian oryx, with protective plastic tubes on the tips of his horns, paces the ground in his new home.

the Arabian Oryx. This board is made up of various bodies including the Fauna Preservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund, the Zoological Society of London, the Arizona Zoological Society and the Shikar Safari Club, the last two societies from the United States. These bodies hold occasional conferences, the last was held in Portugal on Feb. 13, it is hoped that a future conference may be held in Jordan.

To save the rapidly diminishing Arabian oryx from extinction, in 1963 the nucleus of a herd was formed; an expedition was mounted and three were caught in the wild in one of the last known homes of the wild oryx, namely the Sultanate of Oman. Six animals were donated by sponsors, from captive herds -- one from the Emir of Kuwait, four from the King of Saudi Arabia and one from the London Zoo.

During their first year these animals were sent to a reserve in Kenya set up by the World Wildlife Fund and the Fauna Preservation Society, and a search for a permanent home was made. It was important that climatic conditions were as near as possible to their original habitat. Eventually they were sent to Phoenix, Arizona where they flourished -- so much so that the herd, now numbering seventy head, was dispersed to San Diego and to Brownsville, Texas.

Jordan's four animals are from the San Diego Reserve.

Legend of the unicorn

The Arabian oryx is about one metre tall at the shoulder, with a small deer-like head and two very long, thin, knurled horns growing out of the forehead. The body is a soft, honey-beige colour, while the legs, tail and head are a dark brown.

The horns of the oryx -- as seen at a certain angle from the side -- have supposedly given rise to the growth of the legend of the unicorn, a fabulous, single-horned animal with a horse-like body, gifted with magical powers. In heraldry it is often represented with a goat's beard and a lion's tail, thus giving it the virtues of bravery, beauty, wisdom and humility. In the Middle Ages, in the Western World, the unicorn was a symbol of virginity.

Much has been written about the near extinction of oryx leucoryx and indiscriminate hunting by local people



One of the recently arrived oryx in his pen.

come to the rescue of Mr. Clarke and the oryx

Sacred baboon

Another interesting animal on the reserve was given to Mr. Clarke by a private citizen who acquired it on a visit to Saudi Arabia. This is a papio hamadryas or sacred baboon -- the only primate common to the Arabian Peninsula -- found mainly in the forests of Yemen and of southern Saudi Arabia, also in the Horn of Africa and in one single instance, in Egypt. It is the animal revered by the ancient Egyptians and often depicted in their paintings and friezes. It has never been native to Jordan. This friendly, two-year-old male baboon will eventually become one of the first residents of the new Amman Zoo. Meanwhile he gives pleasure to the visitors of the Shaumari Reserve.

Any information required about the reserve and its visiting hours can be obtained from the offices of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature on the Fifth Circle, Amman.



Sacred baboon



A sacred baboon with its leash.

Economic and Business News

AMC pays first part of share in Potash Co.

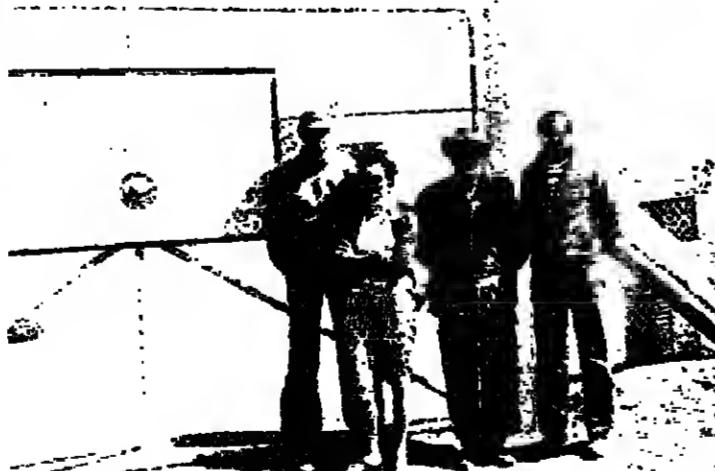
AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The Arab Potash Company has received the sum of JD 2,500,000 from the Arab Mining Company (AMC), a source at the potash company said today. The sum is the first instalment of the mining company's share in the Dead Sea potash project. AMC holds 25 per cent of the project's total capital.

Iran gives \$2m. loan to Marqa housing project

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — Director General of the Housing Corporation Hamdullah Al Nabulsi returned here today from a three-day official visit to Iran. During his stay he signed a \$2 million loan agreement with the Iranian Ministry of Economy under which the latter will finance the building of 300 housing units as part of the Marqa housing project. The Marqa housing project is part of a larger plan to develop the Amman northern area. As well as receiving help from the Jordanian government the project is also being partly financed by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.



Standing beside crates holding the precious oryx, Larry Schiffer, Master Keeper of the San Diego Wild Animal Park of California, U.S.A., is bid bon voyage by Karen Merkert of the Customer Service Department of Alia, at New York City's Kennedy Airport on Feb. 16.



Larry Schiffer (from right to left) poses with Mr. J. Clarke, Mrs. Clarke and a local foreman outside the "animal holding unit".

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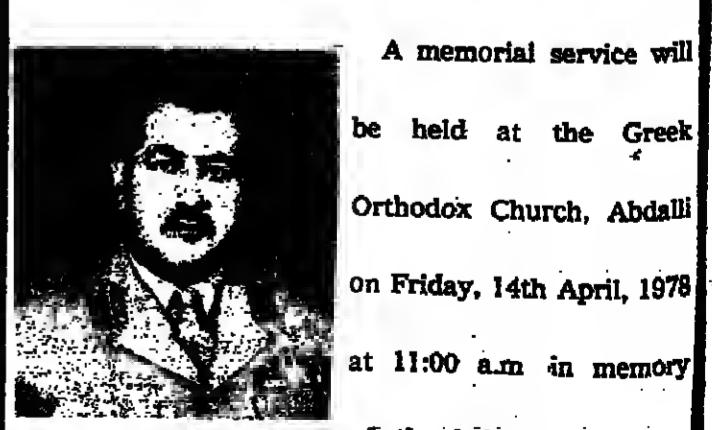
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MEMORIAL SERVICE



Brigadier General Khalil Tawfiq Qawar

Paintings by Ibrahim Najjar Abul Rub are on display daily at the Goethe Institute till next Saturday.

Children's Books Exhibit

The third exhibition of children's books opens today at the King Hussein Club on Jabal Amman. The exhibition is on for one week until Friday 21st.

الجordan times

Shell, Coastal States Gas Corp. to begin oil exploration in Syria

Pat McDonnell
to the Jordan Times

US, April 12 — Two-based petroleum companies have signed contracts with the Syrian government for exploration operations.

are Shell Oil and Coastal States Gas Corporation, spokesman for the Shell Oil Co. is L.W. (Roy) Stoenel Manager of Pecto Co. Petroleum engineer Peteway heads the American Oil Corporation unit of Coastal States Corp.

projects mark the first U.S. petroleum interests in Syria to be operated in Syria. The Tripoli offshore oil concession closed in

swear to a query as to increased the interest

Oil to prospect in

there were enough public

coupled with leased by the Syrian

am Co. that we thought

worthwhile to start an

beginning geophysical

geological surveys on

contract area comprising

square kms. ranging

from Palmyra to the

Will this concession create

jobs for Syrians?

International News Roundup...

RSS to receive 1.5m. Swiss francs

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The technical assistance the Swiss government will provide for the Royal Society (RSS) under a new aid programme next two years, was discussed at today's meeting of the RSS between RSS Director General Dr. Alberros, the Swiss Charge d'affaires in Amman and Director of the examinations and research centre in Gallen, Switzerland. During the meeting it was allocated 1.5 million Swiss francs to supply RSS with machines and equipment besides training of engineers in Swiss industrial and educational institutions. A number of Swiss experts will also be on to help the society's technical departments. Swiss government supplied the RSS with 2.7 million Swiss francs worth of machines and equipment in the former technical aid programme in addition to a number of scholarships.

Princess Basma tours Karak Governorate

AN, April 12 (JNA). — Her Highness Princess Basma morning visited various villages and institutes Karak Governorate to look into social services.

Financiers visit potash project

AN, April 12 (JNA). — Participants in the Arab Company Financiers Conference today visited the potash project at the southern coast of the Red Sea.

Census to be conducted

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The Cabinet decided at meeting today to conduct a census of inhabitants of the next October to assist in future planning the charting of demographic trends. The census is the first comprehensive count of the population 1961.

Cabinet approves Jordanian-Saudi information agreement

AN, April 12 (JNA). — In its session today it approved a Jordanian-Saudi information media which was initiated during Minister of Information Adnan Abu Odeh's visit to Saudi Arabia early January. The accord regulates and promotes the countries cooperation in the fields of journalism, information, bibliography and exchange of radio and television programmes.

er and powdered milk exempt from customs

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The Cabinet today decided to exempt butter and powdered milk from customs

UNRWA to reduce aid to refugees

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) reduce its aid to refugees because of a deficit in budget. The Under-secretary of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Development, Abdul Rahim Jarrar UNRWA intends to make reductions in flour quotas the coming months unless pledges for additional contributions are forthcoming. UNRWA will further partial reductions in education facilities. Mr. Jarra pointed out that in past meetings host countries, including Jordan, refused to accept any cutbacks in WA services. The deficit in the UNRWA budget is at \$26.8 million.

Austrian tourist minister here for talks

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The director of tourism of Austria discussed here today with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ghaleb Barakat cooperation a field of tourism, particularly in training and education. The Austrian tourist expert also visited the ancient city of Jarash and the eastern shore of the Dead Sea where he looked at tourist projects being carried earlier in the day he visited the Martyr's Memorial and Hussein Medical Centre.

proximity of the border of Turkey. You might say we cover north central Syria and that Raqa is roughly the centre of our exploration area."

Negotiations between Shell and the Syrian government spanned more than 12 months before an initial four-year exploration contract renewable for an additional six years at two-year intervals was signed. The second contract pertains to a 25-year development period at such time as Shell enters the production stage.

Stoerz noted the Shell contract equally represents Shell Oil USA and Royal Dutch Shell.

The initial survey period, which officially began March 16 and will tentatively continue through mid-1979, consists of geological -- seismic, magnetic and gravity -- surveys coupled with geological surveys.

"These surveys will lead up to drilling prospects in mid-1979 with two wild cat wells," Stoerz said.

Headquarters for Peetco Syria Co. are in Damascus, housing a small technical and administrative staff. Five American specialists are conducting geological surveys on

the 1,000 square kms. comprising the concession area, comprising

the area from Palmyra to the

Will this concession create

jobs for Syrians?

Coming
&
Going...

Arab mining official off to Somalia and N. Yemen

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — A senior official from the Arab Mining Company (AMC) Mr. Isam Khairi, leaves Amman next Saturday to visit Somalia and North Yemen, a source at the company said today. He will hold talks with officials in the two countries on possible participation by AMC in their mining projects.

Hannah Odeh to go to Kuwait meetings

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — President of the National Planning Council Hanna Odeh and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank Hussein Al Qassem will be leaving for Kuwait soon to attend the annual meeting of the board of governors of the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development. The session is due to start on April 22 and will last for two days.

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AN, April 12 (JNA). — The United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) reduce its aid to refugees because of a deficit in budget. The Under-secretary of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Development, Abdul Rahim Jarrar UNRWA intends to make reductions in flour quotas the coming months unless pledges for additional contributions are forthcoming. UNRWA will further partial reductions in education facilities. Mr. Jarra pointed out that in past meetings host countries, including Jordan, refused to accept any cutbacks in WA services. The deficit in the UNRWA budget is at \$26.8 million.

Austrian tourist minister here for talks

AN, April 12 (JNA). — The director of tourism of Austria discussed here today with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ghaleb Barakat cooperation a field of tourism, particularly in training and education. The Austrian tourist expert also visited the ancient city of Jarash and the eastern shore of the Dead Sea where he looked at tourist projects being carried earlier in the day he visited the Martyr's Memorial and Hussein Medical Centre.

"We foresee 70 to 80 jobs opening under our geographical contractor," Stoerz replied. "This should double to a total of 150 jobs in the fall when we add another crew. At the time we reach the wild cat drilling stage, another 30 to 40 jobs should open."

It may not be time to tell Saudi Arabia to move over, but as geologist Stoerz puts it:

"We're operating on more than a hunch, but we can't say we have definite prospects."

The second American operation, Syrian-American Oil Co., began its physical field operation April 1 within several hundred miles of potential oil producing land in the Deir Al Zor block.

"Surface indications are encouraging," stated Petteway. "Our sub-surface information came from old non-producing wells in the vicinity of the nearby Syrian Petroleum Co."

"Our seismic crew is carrying out a procedure of utilizing sound waves for indications of sub-surface structures. We'll continue this detail work to select the most promising areas to begin drilling in October."

"Preliminary indications are sufficient to support drilling two or three wild cat wells."

The initial two-year contract for exploration and test drilling was effective October 1977 and entailed two years of preliminary negotiations with the Syrian government. The exploration and exploitation (development of surface equipment and pipe lines) phase will be followed with an optional 25-year production contract.

During its survey stage, the Syrian American Oil Corp. is operating with six American specialists: two geologists, two geophysicists, one manager, and one administrative and accounting assistant.

"To have eighty employees for 18 students a year was out of the question," said Mr. Ghandour, who has been involved with aviation in Jordan since 1963 when Alia was founded. The academy now has 16 planes, four expatriate flying instructors, two Jordanian flying instructors, seven Jordanian assistant flying instructors, and King Hussein as one of its first pupils. Although the King was already a qualified pilot, Mr. Ghandour says he is enrolled and turned up for every lesson to set an example for the young people of the country.

"We sought to create a generation of Jordanians capable of working in aviation and reaching management level in technical fields, especially on the flying side."

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(Continued from page 1)

The immediate needs for the academy revolved around a demand for about 18 new pilots a year to cover the natural attrition and normal expansion of Alia and Arab Wings, the executive jet charter company based in Jordan.

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The future of the proposed Arab Air Academy should be clearer by the end of the year, thinks Mr. Ghandour. By then the Arab Civil Aviation Council (part of the Arab League) will have met in November, and it is hoped that all Arab countries will join the five states who have already signed approval for the proposal to establish the academy in Amman.

"His Majesty King Hussein is sending a letter to every Arab head of state asking for support for the project," said Mr. Ghandour.

He stresses the desperate need for such an institution in the Arab World. For example, he says compellingly, in 1963 we formed Alia. Jordan had a long history of aviation. Since 1947 there had been three air

lines in the country before Royal Jordanian. Yet after 18 years of aviation experience in the country we could find only three local co-pilots, no technicians, no engineers and very few qualified sales and ticketing people. "The know-how and technology was not transferred in 18 years!"

Mr. Ghandour says that it was obvious the only way to get this know-how was to create our own technical schools.

The flying club that started in 1965 as a result of this philosophy had Alia Ghandour as one of its ground instructors and King Hussein as one of its first pupils. Although the King was already a qualified pilot, Mr. Ghandour says he is enrolled and turned up for every lesson to set an example for the young people of the country.

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Carter hits at civil servants' wages in new anti-inflation campaign

WASHINGTON, April 12 (Agencies). — President Carter hit at the salaries of civil servants yesterday in a new anti-inflation campaign based on voluntary wage and price restraint. He said he would set an example for Americans by vetoing legislation that exceeded his budget or increased the federal deficit, by proposing a cut in a scheduled pay rise for government workers and by freezing the salaries of senior administration officials.

The president ruled out mandatory wage and price controls, saying he could not imagine any situation in which they could help except in a national emergency such as all-out war.

In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors and at a followup news conference, Carter said he alone could not stem inflation.

"Let me be blunt about this point," he said. "I am asking American workers to follow the example of federal workers and accept lower rate of wage increase."

Mr. Carter's prescription for combating inflation -- running at an annual rate of 8.4 per cent so far this year -- prompted a freeze from union leaders of the federal workers.

The president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said Mr. Carter had "failed the entire labour movement and America's workers because his programme is nothing more than a symbolic gesture against inflation."

Mr. Wurf, president of the

largest union of government workers, put it more bluntly. "It's sheer nonsense to take the first whack at inflation out of the hides of public workers," he said.

Union disapproval

The AFL-CIO's Public Employee Department threatened to withdraw its endorsement of Mr. Carter's proposed civil service reorganisation. Fred Kroll, President of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, rejected the 5.5 per cent example and said he would look instead to the coal miners' three-year, 39 per cent wage settlement.

Mr. Carter's freeze on federal executive salaries, which range up to about \$56,000 a year, will affect only a little more than 2,000 of the government's 1.4 million civilian workers.

Mr. Carter's plan to restrict this year's federal pay increase to 5.5 per cent cannot be imposed. Either the House or Senate can reject his proposal in favour of retaining the 6.5 per cent pay boost that fede-

ral workers ordinarily could expect this fall.

The president's declaration opposing wage-price controls was hailed by the chairman of General Motors and other business executives.

Others were lukewarm about the rest of Carter's programme.

David Moffitt, a spokesman for Continental Oil Co., said "there was nothing new enough to inspire a reaction."

Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda today welcomed President Carter's speech which he said clarified the basic U.S. aim of curbing inflation and restricting oil imports.

In an interview with the publicly-owned National Broadcasting Corporation to be shown on television later today, Mr. Fukuda said he would urge President Carter to defend the dollar when they meet in Washington on May 3.

The dollar fell at one point to 218.15 yen on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market today, reflecting market disappointment at the president's speech which did not contain any significant measures to defend the dollar, dealers said. It later recovered to 218.50.

U.K. budget promises tax cut as polls near

LONDON, April 12 (AP). — Britain's Labour government has outlined a package of tax cuts aimed at stimulating the economy and improving labour's prospects in the next national election.

Mr. Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the House of Commons yesterday that the tax cuts would account for virtually all of the £2.5 billion (\$4.75 billion) to be injected into the economy in the fiscal year that began on April 1.

The chancellor told reporters before delivering the address that it would provide "a little sunshine to brighten up the spring" of Britain's economic recovery. Britain's economic fortunes have improved markedly over the past year with the increasing flow of North Sea oil. The balance of payments went into the black. Inflation edged below 10 per cent in January after reaching a peak of 26 per cent in September 1975. The pound is currently worth around \$1.87 compared to a record low of \$1.56 on Oct. 28, 1976.

But unemployment is running at 1.4 million, around 6 per cent of the workforce, and production is stagnant.

Tax cuts were widely expected as a means of pumping money into the economy, increasing demand and production and providing the incentives which the Labour government's critics say have been eroded under the welfare state.

"It is the first purpose of this budget to encourage a level of economic activity sufficient to get unemployment significantly down," Mr. Healey told the Commons and the nation. It was the first budget speech broadcast live from the House of Commons. Daily radio broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings began on April 3 and some law-makers referred to Mr. Healey's speech as the "Radio Budget".

There was no disputing that the British economy needs stimulating, but there was a widespread feeling that the chancellor did not go far enough.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, leader of the opposition Conservative Party, said Mr. Healey is a "late convert to tax cuts, and his conversion is only election deep."

There has been speculation that Prime Minister James Callaghan will call a national election in the autumn. If so, this would be Mr. Healey's last budget before an election. The tax cuts made possible by North Sea oil cannot help but sway some voters.

Britons are among the most highly taxed people in the world, with a basic tax rate of 34 per cent and a top rate of 83 per cent.

High taxes at the upper end of the scale have resulted in a new term in the British vernacular -- the "Tax Exile". These are the top earners -- pop stars, authors, athletes, professional people -- who have fled Britain's shores to avoid what they consider punitive tax rates.

Egypt, Romania sign electricity protocol

VIENNA, April 12 (R). — Egypt and Romania signed a protocol in Bucharest yesterday on cooperation in electricity production, the official Agerpres News Agency reported.

The agreement was signed by Romanian First Deputy Prime Minister Gheorghe Oprea and Egyptian Electric Power Minister Ahmad Sultan.

Mr. Sultan, who is on an official visit to Romania, had talks with President Ceausescu earlier yesterday.

The Egyptian minister also signed an agreement for the Romanian foreign trade company Romenergo to lay electricity lines in several rural areas of Egypt, Agerpres said. No further details were given.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON, (R). — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies against the dollar at the close of interbank trading on the London foreign exchange market last night. Tourist rates will differ from those quoted below.

One sterling	1,762/69	U.S. dollars
One dollar	2,013/40	West German marks
	2,148/95	Dutch guilders
	1,867/90	Swiss francs
	31,34/37	Belgian francs
	4,539/5410	French francs
	850,80/851,30	Italian lire
	218,80/90	Japanese yen
	4,575/85	Swedish crowns
	5,301/20	Norwegian crowns
	5,547/50	Danish crowns

LONDON MARKET REPORT

Stock prices closed lower Wednesday in thin trading, dealers said. At 15:00 the F.T. index was down 10.3 at 460.1.

Uncertainty about money supply growth and the likelihood of higher short-term interest rates, plus concern about the inflationary effects of funding the public sector borrowing requirement forecast in the budget unsettled the market, dealers said. Government bonds ended up to 1-1/2 point lower, while industrial leaders fell as much as 13p.

Golds eased with the lower bullion fixing, U.S., Canadian and Australian stock were narrowly higher.

Price of gold closed in London Wednesday at \$180.00/oz.

Bahrain's crude oil production increases

BAHRAIN, April 12 (R). — Bahrain's crude oil production increased last year to an average of 59,182 barrels a day, reversing an earlier trend towards declining production from the island state's oilfields, according to figures released here today by the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO).

BAPCO reported, however, a 13 per cent increase in natural gas production last year to a total of 332 million cubic feet.

Crude oil output in 1976 averaged 58,165 barrels a day and the production increase last year was attributed by a company spokesman to the extensive introduction of modern recovery techniques in Bahrain's oil fields where production started in 1932, the first on

the Arab side of the Gulf, BAPCO (Bahrain Petroleum Company) is now 60 per cent owned by the government, but officials here said recently an agreement had been reached on 100 per cent state control to be announced shortly.

The Bahrain refinery, which is owned exclusively by the American Caltex group, the foreign partner in BAPCO, increased throughput by 18 per cent to an average of 260,913 barrels a day, BAPCO said.

The refinery, one of the biggest in the Middle East, processes all the crude oil produced in Bahrain and receives the balance by pipeline from Saudi Arabia. Throughput in 1976 averaged 220,750 barrels a day. The company also reported

shipments of 271,163 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) last year, a 75 per cent increase on 1976.

Finland to increase oil imports from Iraq

HELSINKI, April 12 (R). — Finnish imports of crude oil from Iraq will rise to 600,000 tons this year under a newly-signed agreement.

Imports were only 200,000 tons in 1976 but jumped to 400,000 last year.

The present deal was signed earlier this week in Baghdad, according to the state-owned Neste Importing and Distributing Company here.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL ROUNDUP

New York Yankees beaten again

NEW YORK, April 12 (AP).

The slugging Milwaukee Brewers continued their heavy hitting last night, getting two home runs from Gorman Thomas and one from Cecil Cooper in beating the New York Yankees 9-4.

The Brewers, 4-0, have hit nine home runs, scored 49 runs and collected 49 hits in their fast start.

Cooper and Thomas homered off loser Catfish Hunter,

while Thomas' second two-run shot of the night and third home run of the season came of Rawly Eastwick.

A two-out single by Sal Bando and Thomas' first homer of the game gave the Brewers a 3-1 lead in the second inning, when, with the bases loaded, Atlanta pitcher Phil Niekro hit a grounder to third baseman Bill Almon. He tagged the runner heading to third, threw to second for a forceout and the relay to first beat Niekro for the third out.

Jack Clark's eighth-inning homer off Dave Tomlin powered the San Francisco Giants to a 3-2 triumph over the Cincinnati Reds.

Milt May's three-run homer backed the six-hit pitching of Dave Rozema as the Detroit Tigers defeated the Texas Rangers 6-2.

In the National League, J.R. Richard allowed just two hits and Cesar Cedeno drove home the lone run as the Houston Astros beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 1-0.

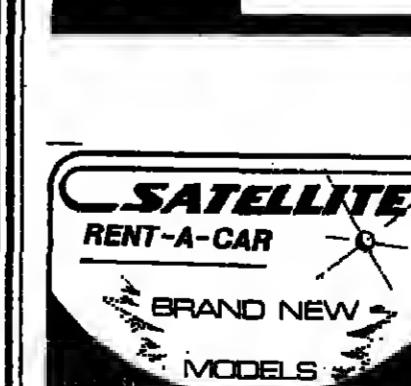
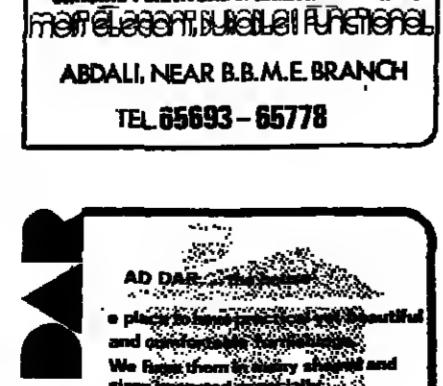
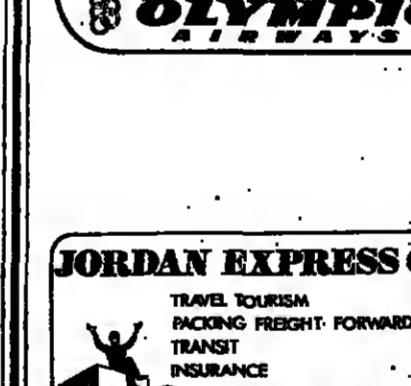
Bobby Murcer drove in two runs and Rick Reuschel limited New York to four hits in seven innings, leading the Chicago Cubs to a 4-2 triumph

over the Mets.

George Hendrick doubled home Dave Winfield in the ninth inning to give the San Diego Padres a 3-2 victory over the Atlanta Braves. The Padres pulled a triple play in the second inning when, with the bases loaded, Atlanta pitcher Phil Niekro hit a grounder to third baseman Bill Almon. He tagged the runner heading to third, threw to second for a forceout and the relay to first beat Niekro for the third out.

Gary Alexander belted a two-run homer and Pete Broberg combined with relievers Bob Lacey and Elias Sosa as the Oakland A's beat the Seattle Mariners 2-0 and Roger Erickson pitched a seven-hitter and Mike Cubbage and Roy Smalley homered to highlight a five-run fifth inning that powered the Minnesota Twins to an 8-1 victory over the California Angels.

AMMAN MARKETPLACE



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FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1978

Your Daily HOROSCOPE

from the CARROLL RIGHTER INSTITUTE

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day when you can accomplish a great deal by concentrating on matters that are associated with improving family relations. Take time to study your property interests.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) Plan some entertainment at home that can bring pleasure to family members. Avoid an opponent who is jealous of you.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Go over written material and eliminate any errors in them. Make business calls and then visit friends and relatives. Be happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Allow time to put your business affairs in better order. Find new outlets that can be beneficial for you. Be more logical.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Make a close study of yourself and see where you can improve your appearance. Relax at home tonight.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21) A good day, to reconcile with an associate if you have had a misunderstanding. Find a better way to gain your personal aims.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Try to contact friends you have not seen in a long time and something good will come of this. Take no chances with your health.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Don't neglect career duties at this time. Study financial status and find the right way to gain more security in the future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You need to study all details of a new project you are working on to be achieve success. Be exact with facts and figures.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Don't wait any longer in handling an important responsibility. State your desires to mate and reach a better understanding.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Try to cement better relations with an associate so that the future becomes more mutually satisfying. Ignore a bad mood.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) Organize your work schedule so you are more efficient and can accomplish more. Follow your bounces which are good now.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Doing something thoughtful for your mate will bring fine results now. Take modern treatments to improve your health.

USSR's Marxist economy suffers inflation in the midst of industrial inefficiency

By David Satter
The Financial Times
Moscow correspondent

MOSCOW (FT) — Halfway through a five year plan which excused its low growth targets by a purported emphasis on "efficiency and quality", the Soviet economy shows signs of running down, swamped in its own inefficiency.

The latest blow for Soviet planners came in the 1977 economic results which showed that the goal for Soviet national income had not been met.

Agricultural production was sharply down and industry barely achieved targets which were the second lowest in 30 years.

The results were bad, and what's more, they are consistent with the steady downward drift in key Soviet national economic indices since the end of World War II.

At what must have been a singularly depressing meeting of the Soviet Council of Ministers preceding publication of the 1977 results, some of the blame for the minimal 3.5 per cent increase in national income (a measure comparable with gross national product) was laid to ministries which had failed to complete projects.

Individual enterprises were criticised for squandering workers' time, underutilising expensive machinery and over-conserving raw materials.

The target for National Income growth had been 4.1 per cent. The 1977 result was evidently so embarrassing that the Soviet authorities felt compelled to lump it together with the 5.0 per cent increase in national income achieved in 1976 and used the two-year total as evidence of the country's progress in the 1976-80 five year plan period.

In the early 1950s, national income, the best overall measure of Soviet economic growth, increased by as much as 12.3 per cent per year.

The most serious shortfall for the Soviets in 1977 was in agriculture, the economy's traditional Achilles' heel. Official figures indicate that agricultural production increased by 3.0 per cent this figure is based on a 1973 price base, which would tend to overstate the value of production.

Western agricultural experts believe that as a result of a disappointing 1977 grain harvest which fell more than 17 m. tons below target, Soviet agricultural output actually decreased in 1977 by five per cent.

There was some consolation for Soviet planners in industrial production results exceeding expectations by small margins. But the targets were exceedingly modest and despite this, oil, coal and steel

production were all below target.

Pressure to increase prices

The shortfalls in production have led to pressure to increase prices even though it has always been a point of ideological pride in the Soviet Union that only a planned economy can avoid Western-style inflation.

At the beginning of March, Mr. Nikolai Glushkov, chairman of the State Prices Committee, announced that the price of petrol would be doubled and the cost of coffee trebled. Petrol now sells for between 16 and 20 kopecks (21p and 26p) per litre and coffee beans for about 20 rubles (about £2.60) per kilo.

These price increases were not so startling in themselves, particularly in the case of coffee where the cost has risen sharply on world commodity markets; but they presage further price rises in a count-

ry where prices are supposed to be stable.

In January 1977, the Soviets, with tradition and announced the first significant price rises. They doubled air fares, taxi fares and fares for sea and river transport. The new petrol and coffee increases announced in March generated a wave of rumours that even more drastic price increases on staple products would be put into effect on April 1.

The rumours were so widespread that they had to be officially denied by the Soviet news agency Tass before they could -- for the time being -- be laid to rest.

With production stagnant and the very real possibility that the 1980 target for national income may not be achieved before 1981, the Soviet Union is going to be hard pressed to muster the resources necessary for expensive Siberian development without raising prices still further.

The development is essential if the USSR is to exploit its rich energy resources.

Subsidies

As matters stand, the Soviet government is spending vast quantities of money to subsidise the sale of products at stable retail prices. In 1976, the cost of subsidising milk and meat sales was 19 billion roubles (about £4 billion) and the cost of subsidising housing was five billion roubles (about £2.3 billion).

The web of state subsidies is one of the reasons for a rumour which alleged that meat prices were about to be doubled. This rumour struck people in Moscow as completely plausible, and it may yet be proved true.

Some of the underlying problems which have bedevilled the Soviet economy are discussed at the end of last year in a three part series in the Communist party newspaper Pravda by Dmitri Valov, an economist and the newspaper's deputy editor.

With industrial labour productivity increasing by only 4.1 per cent in 1977, compared to 10.1 per cent in 1981 despite a massive influx of Western technology, the question of improved efficiency has become critical. Mr. Valov said that the economy's concentration on gross output

and the absence of indicators able to measure other economic functions such as contracts filled or production per man hour, create endemic inefficiencies and lead to staggering waste.

In 1976, unfinished projects constituted 80 per cent of the capital invested and raw materials were regularly squandered because an enterprise's output is calculated in part on the basis of expended materials.

This encourages managers to use as much and as expensive material as possible making their products, even if this leads to breakdowns or bottlenecks further down the line.

Typically, shortages and slow deliveries hamper all aspects of the economy.

Mr. Yuri Brezhnev, a deputy foreign trade minister and the son of the Soviet president, confirms that transportation bottlenecks are interfering with foreign trade, and Soviet officials have stated that idle time in the construction industry frequently amounts to 20 per cent of the work time because of disruptions to supplies.

Soviet officials have pledged to make the economy more efficient, but so far they have given little indication of how this is to be achieved.

-- Financial Times

News-Features

Malta mounts last ditch effort to ensure viable economic future after Britain leaves

By Godfrey Grima
The Financial Times
correspondent in Malta

VALETTA (FT) — With the permanent closure of British military bases due to be completed in 1980, more than fifteen months' Malta's socialist government, lead by Premier Dom Mintoff, is mounting a last ditch effort to ensure that the island's future proves no less economically viable than politically stable.

Signs of this effort meeting success are not overtly encouraging and its prodigious growth since 1971. Malta's economy appears little able to overcome the loss of an annual 28 million Maltese pounds currently earned from

Britain's military presence.

This is not to belittle the considerable progress which is still being achieved against great odds. Presenting this year's £M109 m. budget in parliament, Mr. Mintoff's Finance Minister, Dr. Joe Abela recently announced that the economy had grown by another nine per cent. Despite criticism levelled at the government on its handling of the economy, the limited incentives offered to attract foreign investments, and the gradual slide into socialism, the government insists that Malta has fared much better than most countries in Western Europe.

From £M189.5 m. in 1976

Malta will have to stand alone, without the help, afforded by the U.K. military presence. In practice this will mean reliance on cash aid from other nations; but there is little assurance that this will be forthcoming.

In 1977 to £M217.3 m. Manufacturing firms produced £M168.8 m. worth of goods ranging from toys to heavy duty switchgear. This showed a £M30 m. increase over the previous year's figure. The value of the resultant exports rose to £M101.8 m., the greater part of which was purchased by Common Market countries led by Germany.

The drydock, with a work force of more than 5,000 people and with its fortunes on the upgrade, are now making a profit rather than losing money. Ship repair and shipbuilding sales grew to more than £M15 m.

Dedicated to, if not obsessed with the creation of an even wider range of dockyard services, Mr. Mintoff has ordered the building of a new yard at Marsa to build tankers. At the same time a jumbo-sized drydock is being built by the Chinese for the servicing of 300,000 ton tank-

ers. In an effort to revive Malta's image as a maritime trading port, a £M48 m. trans-shipment harbour is being constructed, again with international help, on the island's south coast at Marsaxlokk.

Other sectors too were booming. Malta's burgeoning tourist industry, for example, is netting the economy an annual £M34.5 m. This year some 400,000 holidaymakers, compared with 211,000 five years ago, are expected to visit the island.

But what Malta's healthy balance of payments really depicts is the momentum by which the economy is cruising ahead. Last year a £M19.3 m. surplus was recorded on current account. Foreign currency reserves rocketed to an all time high of £M318 m.

Social conditions too have been improved. Between 1974 and the end of last year, the minimum wage rose from £M3 to almost £M16 a week. End of year bonuses given by both the public and private sector increased from £M3 in 1973 to £M60 in 1977. On the other hand the cost of living according to government figures, went up by a relatively low rate of 10 per cent.

Yet all this remains inadequate when compared to the island's overall requirements after the British leave in 1979. The initiative, launched in 1972, to create a self-reliant economy which can safely sail ahead after an annual income of £M28 from Britain disappears, has failed. Proof of this lies not only in the government's own statistics, which show investments to be running the risk of stagnating after 1979, but also in Mr. Mintoff's ongoing cash-aid talks with France, Italy, Libya and Algeria.

Even more disconcerting are the indications that the economy is contracting rather than expanding. The island's gross domestic product last year grew by only nine per cent, which represents a decline of eight per cent over the 1976 figure.

Gross capital formation,

which in 1976 grew by 28.5 per cent, last year increased by 27.6 per cent. Investments are of crucial importance to Malta whose only chance of safely crossing the threshold to a viable economic and stable political future rests with the number of jobs which can be created.

1977 exports though climbing to a record £M121.8 m. were in fact up by only 25 per cent increase in 1976.

The decline was reflected in the overall performance of the economy. In 1976 Malta showed a current account surplus of £M26.6 m.; in 1977 this dropped to £M19.3 m. Official reserves were felt the impact. In 1977 reserves went up by £M57.9 m. but last year by only £M31.8 m. a drop of 14 per cent.

Social improvements too were not financed by the government alone; gains made by some sections of the population were often at the expense of others.

Salary movements within the public sector offer a good example. Seven years ago, when Labour came into power, the ratio between the lower and higher grades was one to seven; by last year this had dropped to one to three.

A prominent civil service trade union leader argues: "This situation has caused efficiency within the public sector to drop drastically."

In brief, success and failure have been chasing each other round Malta's seven year development plan without the island gaining enough strength to soften the impact of Britain's coming military withdrawal.

Government has now arrived at the problem everyone envisaged a long time ago. One hopes now that Libya, Algeria, France and Italy will agree to provide the funds. But at this stage there are little more than pious hopes," a leading economist somewhat woefully points out.

-- Financial Times

News-Features

